MODERN RELIGIOUS PROBLEMS

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

GEORGE WILLIAM KNOX

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Modern Religious Problems

EDITED BY

AMBROSE WHITE VERNON

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS THE SON OF GOD

AN INTERPRETATION FOR THE MODERN MAN

BY

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"That ye may be the sons of your Father which is in heaven."

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TO MY DEAR CHILDREN

A word of acknowledgment is due to my friend and fellow worker, Professor James Everett Frame, for his patient reading of the MS. and for his keen criticisms and valuable suggestions.

G. W. K.

Union Theological Seminary.
August 11, 1909.

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INTRODUCTION

It is not too much to say that the present generation stands before a crisis in the history of the Christian religion. We look out upon a different world from that of our fathers; our sacred books have forfeited the particular authority which they had possessed for centuries; human life is seen less clearly against an eternal background, now that war and disease have become checked. It is the purpose of this series of books to reëxamine the Christian Scriptures and the Christian faith in the light of these facts.

We look out, we say, upon a different world from that of our fathers. It has been marvelous to see how the insight and patient toil of Darwin have revolutionized the apprehension of the universe. No first-rate man of science can to-day be found who be-

lieves in the immutability of species. When we remember that fifty years ago no one doubted it, the significance of the labor of Charles Darwin, A. R. Wallace, and their followers is clear. While men may differ among themselves regarding the means by which the origin of species is brought about, some emphasizing more and some emphasizing less what Darwin called "Natural Selection," his main contention that species have arisen by evolution from earlier species rather than by a special creative act of God may be said to be universally accepted. As the years have gone on, the religious import of this discovery has become apparent.

In the first place, with the growth of the agnostic temper we have realized how many men had come to a belief on God through the marvels of the natural world. Seventy-five years before Darwin, Kant had shown, it is true, the insufficiency of the approach to God through arguments founded on the

natural world and the sufficiency of the approach to Him through the necessary postulates of morality, but Kant's work was generally unheeded. Darwin himself had come to his belief on God largely through the natural theology of Paley. When, therefore, he discovered that the marvels of the natural world were, at least in the overwhelming majority of cases, marvels of slow development rather than of sudden creation, the chief foundations of his own faith were shattered, and he was obliged reluctantly to write himself down as an agnostic. His experience has proved typical. Men who relied on the direct intervention of God in the creation of the natural world to obtain belief on Him have forfeited that belief. The passing years have revealed how large that number has been.

But apart from this fact, which seems so discreditable to the moral sense of man, the acceptance of the doctrine of evolution

by all intelligent and educated men has diminished the possibility of founding belief upon miracle or supernatural intervention of any kind. It has shifted the burden of proof. Before the time of Darwin, men could say of a scriptural miracle: "This has been believed by all our fathers. It is only one more instance of the interposition of God, which we see in the countless species of the natural world. The rational course is to believe it. If we are not to believe it, you must disprove it first." Now men are forced to give absolutely adequate reasons for the *acceptance* of the Biblical miracles, rather than their rejection. These miracles are now out of line with the world in which we live rather than in line with it. The simple and amazing fact is that no religion can be accepted to-day because of the supernatural interventions by which it is supported, whereas fifty years ago no religion would have been deemed worthy of acceptance

except upon such supernatural grounds. This fact is borne in mind by all the contributors to this series of volumes.

But the aspect of the world has changed no more than our apprehension of the Scriptures. Driven by the shifting of the burden of proof to a closer examination of the Biblical documents, honest and conscientious scholars of the Old Testament have discovered that in many important cases the documents are hundreds of years removed from the events which they describe; they have found that the Mosaic law, so far from being created on the mount as the beginning of a new moral species, is the product of centuries of religious life and longing and disappointment; they have found in the diverse books of the Bible irreconcilable discrepancies of statement and wide divergence of doctrine; they have come upon men whose greatness the former theories of inspiration had obscured, and they have

found their greatness to consist not in peculiar fitness for the performance of miraculous deeds in the natural world, but in exceptional power for overcoming the world of the spirit by faith in God and by a growing reverence and hope for men. Men who have been conspicuous in this new discovery of the Old Testament are the contributors to this series.

The same honest examination which has revolutionized our conception of the Old Testament has been applied to the New Testament. It has also been found to be a human product, to contain errors of fact, to be composed of books of varying historical value, — from the Gospel of Mark and the Epistles of Paul on the one hand to the reflective Gospel of John and the spurious Second Epistle of Peter on the other. While New Testament scholarship has emphasized the spiritual supremacy of Jesus Christ and established his unique power over both

diseased and undiseased humanity, it has left his direct intervention in the laws of the natural world at least an open question. The contributors to this series appreciate the profound importance of these facts.

If we add to the changed conceptions of the World and the Bible, a new delight in the beauty and in the mastering of nature, a new interest and enthusiasm for the development of the society of this present age, and a growing disregard of any world to come, I think that we are justified in saying that we live in a crisis for religious faith.

This series of books is written for the sake of those men who are sensitive to the prevailing atmosphere of their time, and who are at the same time desirous of conserving the great moral and religious values that have been wrought out by the Christian centuries, and of partaking of that strength and peace which are the peculiar effects of Christian faith. Among those who share

these desires are many who have not the leisure to master long philosophical or Biblical treatises, but who are anxious to obtain in a small compass the assured results of modern scholarship on the matters most immediately connected with religious faith. It is a significant sign of the times that men of the highest attainment in scholarship have been found willing and eager to perform this service. For out of the stress of the last years, it is becoming evident that the Christian world is in possession of "things which cannot be shaken." The ideal of service is more firmly established than ever in the world as the supreme ideal of the race. A sense of eternal value to justify and establish that ideal has become absolutely essential to the highest human life. Jesus Christ as the highest and the supreme personality of history, the founder of the ideal of service and the mediator of the faith and love which are alone adequate

to its maintenance and its realization, has become better apprehended and more universally revered than ever before as the only — but the adequate — guide of men into faith upon God and communion with Him.

These books are written therefore with the utmost hospitality for all modern natural and psychological and Biblical science, with the desire of making clear to the average intelligent and religious man that this great religious crisis may be passed through as safely and as bravely as others have been, that nature is not to obtain the mastery over the spirits of men, and that a man, incredulous of miracle, may still through Jesus Christ be permitted to apprehend, to perform, and to glory in the will of God.

The editor does not, of course, subscribe to all the opinions advanced by the contributors to this series. He has sought to enlist men of high scholarship, of earnest

religious feeling, and of openness of mind in this endeavor to set forth the leading ideas and convictions of modern liberal scholarship. Such men are in agreement upon certain large underlying ideas, but differ from one another on many an important point. This is only to say that religious problems are living problems.

AMBROSE WHITE VERNON.

THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

I

RELIGION AND THE MODERN MAN

EVERY age determines its gospel, even though it be the Gospel of Jesus Christ. At least the emphasis is changed in different times and by different individuals, so that though they profess the same creed and follow the same ritual and are loyal to the same organization, the adage holds that the same thing done by different persons is not the same thing. However stoutly we affirm the gospel to be unchanging, it is not precisely "the same old story" which is repeated generation after generation. Man himself does not remain unmodified by the changing environments in which he lives, and the ob-

jects on which he looks tell a different tale with his increasing knowledge, even though the object be the faith delivered once for all to the saints. Certain facts, it is true, remain constant, and within this range religion continues the same; but for the most part the evolutions and revolutions in economic and social conditions, and in knowledge, affect essentially all the contents of the mind, and, not the least, religion.

Religion is simply an aspect of humanity; for men are religious as they are intellectual and æsthetic, by nature. Religion is therefore truly one, as truly as is knowledge, as truly as is humanity; but it is also as diversified as is knowledge, as diversified as are the individuals who compose mankind. Doubtless in religion, under our Protestant training, we are accustomed to put the emphasis upon our individuality, but the emphasis is at least debatable. For most people are religious by

custom and surroundings, accepting their creed as they accept their politics. They are of the religion of their parents as they are of their nationality, and they go with the family, or with their social group, to keep holy day as they go with them to keep holiday. They give to the church devotion as they give loyalty to the government, and will make sacrifices in time of need for either. This is the form of religion which scholars call "natural religion," because of its unreflecting and instinctive character. Should doubts arise, they are readily dismissed or answered by traditional arguments to which the mind is open. Emotions of reverence gather around the sacred places and objects, and attach themselves to the hymns and prayers, and a feeling arises that he who is worshiped is present. The emotions give reality to the traditional forms and make them portions of the living experience.

Changes in one's surroundings, or occu-

pation, or circle of friends may produce indifference to religion, or hostility as unreflecting as was the loyalty. Such indifference is more common now than in the past, not because men are more skeptical, but because changes of residence and of occupation are more frequent. Men think that they have outgrown forms of faith and worship when they have merely changed their abode; but a return to the old surroundings may revive the old emotions, and they may be again zealous for the church. Similar causes lead some men to change their denomination instead of leading them to give up religious observances; for in this stage of religion, however much stress is laid upon peculiar tenets and ritual, the similarities in the sects are far greater than the differences, the chief similarity being in this, that the choice is determined, not by the individual, but by the group to which he belongs.

In the Protestant denominations are many varieties of opinion as to the doctrines necessary to salvation, the form of church organization, the functions of ministers, and the administration of the sacraments, — all tending to become matters of course to those who accept them, and of indifference to all others, — but there is a common background in which the agreement is general. This common ground may be summed up thus: Religion is belief in God and Christ and obedience to God's revealed will, and salvation is the future and eternal reward of faithfulness. The implicit inference, often made explicit, is that were there no future life religion would cease, as it is essentially a means to a happy immortality. If belief in immortality is weakened devotion languishes, and when it is strong religious duties are diligently performed. The present life is evil if it diverts attention from the considera-

tion of the future life, so that a large part of religious discourse is directed to inciting consciousness of the transitory nature of this world and the certainty of that which is to come.

This obedience to God's will includes the observance of the Sabbath day, attendance upon public worship, the maintenance of private devotion, and if possible participation in some form of religious work, while the conduct must be moral, that is, it must conform to the accepted standards of the community. The belief in God and Christ includes the deity of Christ, the resurrection from the dead, the saving power of his death, and the leading articles of the Apostles' Creed, and with some such modicum of belief and practice the churches are content.

With this "other worldly" notion of religion is associated another which is even more influential. God is an ever-present help in times of trouble and his aid is of the

most practical character. The great shrine at Lourdes has been made rich in the past few years by the offerings of those who have been miraculously healed, and delivered from worldly disaster. In Protestant churches prayers are offered for rain, for recovery from illness, for safety at sea, and for deliverance from death. Religious biography abounds in accounts of God's interposition, and even irreligious men have been known to fall impulsively upon their knees when danger threatened. A great sect has arisen in our day through the belief that religious faith can heal diseases and make men supreme over matter and all the ills which it entails, while in the Christian Church are kindred movements insisting that religion can be perpetuated only as it proves itself a helper in this world. All this is as old as religion, since man has sought God's help in his daily life from the beginning, from the time when he first learned to look up. The

progress of science, with its insistence upon the certainty of law, has done little to dispel the belief. At most it has changed the form, the modern creed being phrased in psychological terms, but the substance remains much as before.

Definite and relatively stable types of religion are formed which perpetuate themselves in organizations, sects, denominations, churches; and within each peculiarities persist long after the immediate causes of their formation have disappeared, but the insistence upon them is only in small measure the mark of religious differences. To be sure, the differing churches have their own special types, their distinctive colorings, but their agreements are more important than their differences. It is like the loyalty of the Englishman and the American,—the symbols and traditions are different but the fundamental patriotism is much the same. So long as religion is thus chiefly

the outcome of the group it will be essentially the same, even though nominally the differences are as great as those which separate the Roman Catholic from the Baptist.

Religion, however, has its individualistic side, and in Protestantism this has been accentuated. Every Christian must have a religious experience and thus pass out from the stage of natural religion. But this demand becomes itself traditional and customary, so that most persons can comply with it, as it is less and less rigorously defined. For in all activities there comes a time when our personality asserts itself and that which before had been matter of simple imitation and custom is appropriated and made our own, the eyes now perceiving of themselves. In religion such a change may be startling in its suddenness, so that the day and hour of conversion are remembered, or it may be spread over a longer period and be as gradual as the

passage of childhood through youth to maturity; but in either case the emotions are aroused and give reality to that which before had been merely accepted on authority. Sometimes this change rises into ecstasy, and into those abnormal states in which visions are seen; but through it all the customary institutions and ideas are regnant, for they furnish the material which the emotions heighten and transform.

This emotional experience affords the motive power to religion, for the emotions of awe and dependence transform mere intellectual assent and formal compliance with rites into a living faith. It is this experience which men desire, for which they seek church and temple. Let it be understood that there is power in any service and it will not want for crowded congregations. There is a sense of transcending time and place, — the ordinary self is forgotten and the soul comes into a higher

unity. The feelings will be differently expressed, but all agree that in such moments a sense of reality is gained, and that in them only is the truth of religion known. For periods longer or shorter, religions may maintain themselves by creed and rite and organization, but without the touch of emotion they have but the semblance of life and ultimately vanish away.

Sometimes, nay often, emotion is cherished solely for itself, being esteemed the whole of religion. In heathen cults this is found in depraved forms, confounded with the emotions aroused by cruelty, and more commonly with those of sex and intoxication. Unrestrained license may be given to the passions, and drugs and liquors used to produce a sacred drunkenness. Or bodily movements may accomplish the same end. For example, the shouting and whirling dervishes and the ignorant multitudes among ourselves regard exhaustion

and catalepsy as evident tokens of the divine presence. The mysteries of trance and dream and hypnosis are called into play to stimulate the feelings of mystery and wonder, and to give an impression of a power which is inexplicable and superhuman. The persistence of these forms of religion and their recrudescence in our day of enlightenment illustrates how strong are such emotions and how imperatively they demand gratification.

The church may minister to the emotions by solemn music, stately ritual, majestic structures, and great congregations. The individual is made aware at once of his littleness and of his greatness. He loses himself to find himself again in the procession of which he is a part or in the cathedral in which he worships. Some temperaments are keenly sensitive also to the influences of nature in its sublimer aspects. Jonathan Edwards rejoiced in thunder-storms, throw-

ing open wide his window that he might feel the presence of God without hindrance, and similar experiences have produced some of the noblest poetry of the Bible. Nature emphasizes the littleness of man and his greatness. The individual loses himself in the majestic whole only to find himself again lifted out of weakness into power, from finitude into the limitless, up from self to God. In its extreme form this emotional experience rises into mysticism, wherein all distinctions disappear in an immediacy which no language can utter nor symbol represent. In that knowledge is found absolute peace,—the peace which surpasseth utterance, as it passeth intellectual comprehension.

Individuals of a highly developed intellectual type find their religion by a withdrawal from the world of the senses and the concentration of the attention upon ideas. A world view is formed which reveals the truth, in which the ordinary self is seen in

its true place and value in relation to all the phenomena of the world. The deeper self becomes one with the Infinite. The classic representation of this form is the Hindu religion, wherein the soul by an immediate intuition is known as the Absolute, indescribable and indefinable and to be found only in the experience itself. Here an intellectual process leads to God, as in mysticism an emotional experience produces the same result. God is the Infinite for both, and thereby not to be described, since definition is for the limited. He is all the more real, in the reality of which finite things are manifestations. True religion, from this point of view, is not the agreement of the intellect compelled by logic, but it is an immediate and certain knowledge which transforms the world. In the Christian church a long line of theologians and of saints have approximated this point of view. The end of religion is a beatific vision of God, and when

it is attained all else is recognized as symbolic, even Christ, for in the end he gives up his position as mediator and God is all and in all.

Religion is intimately connected with ethics, so intimately that it has been defined as "morality touched with emotion." Such a definition is by no means adequate, and yet most regard the two as in some degree one. In fact their relationship is something which has not yet been made wholly clear. To many persons the situation presents itself in some such fashion as this: The moral law is established by God. The religious man obeys it. Were there no God there would be no ethics, for He is its source, and were there no revelation of this law men would cease at once to be moral in this world and would give up also religion. The motive of morality would be taken away, for the sanctions of the law are life and death eternal. Now, a law without sanctions is no law. To

other men such a conception destroys ethics instead of establishing it, and they deny God in the interest of morality. For virtue is not a means to some other good, it is not long-sightedness, a "genius for calculation," the best policy, but it is the supreme good to be loved for itself alone. The same result is reached, however, from belief in God when He is identified, as with Edwards, with disinterested benevolence. Then, in a paradoxical form, men are willing to be damned for the glory of God, a paradox which contains the profoundest truth. With a prophet like Hosea and in the teaching of Jesus the hard religion of law becomes the religion of sympathizing love and of self-sacrificing service. The individual loses himself, not in cosmic emotion, but in the needs of his fellows. Such sympathy is of the very nature of man, and in religion it is exalted to the first place. Thus do men consecrate themselves to a great cause, counting not their own lives

dear to them and finding a sacramental sanctity in death for their fellows or for some glorious end. Like Moses they may ask to be blotted out of God's Book or like Paul to be separated eternally from Christ for the sake of the brethren after the flesh. Morality thus rises to religion, not because it is touched with emotion but because the self is lost in the whole, and men losing their lives for the sake of others find them.

II

THE NATURE AND PRESENT STATE OF THEOLOGY

A MAN'S real creed often differs widely from the theology to which he gives intellectual assent. What does he adore and trust? The answer will be his true confession of faith. For, in religion, adoration combines with trust and results in activities. This distinguishes faith from fancy, for the latter does not necessarily eventuate in conduct; it may please us irrespective of the reality of its object. But disproof of the existence of God destroys religion, as man depends only upon that which is. When theology is something more than the repetition of traditional formulæ and the logical arrangement of material, it must be in earnest, for it deals

with that which is deepest and of the most pressing importance, — with truth, and that truth which affects the life.

Religion precedes it, as facts precede science. First is revelation, and then theology which rests upon it. The prophet — Moses, Isaiah, Paul — sees the vision which stirs his soul and calls forth religious activities. The message follows: an attempt in words to set forth that which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor mind conceived, but is revealed to the spirit by the Spirit. Disciples of the prophet, one degree removed, interpret his words and deeds and symbols as they are able. After them come the scribes, who apply the rules of grammar and unfold the treasures of philology, and finally the system-makers, who combine the result of exegesis with the stores of philosophy and out of the whole construct with infinite labor a great world scheme. This, then, shall dominate

the whole, and the original message be reinterpreted in its light. When the dynamic power of the religious revelation is great it may take on many forms, as it passes from continent to continent and from century to century, until it forms a vast empire of the spirit, with widely differing races and civilizations influenced by it and influencing it in turn. In succeeding ages new movements arise, and there are strifes, and internal wars, and wide departures from the original revelation, while still perhaps a common type of religion continues, or perhaps only a common name.

Christianity takes up into itself the Old Testament, and it rests upon the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief corner-stone. He is its transforming fact, but already within the limits of the New Testament there are differences of interpretation. Soon the genius of the Greeks reinterpreted the facts and arranged them

according to the categories of their philosophy and sought solutions to problems which had never suggested themselves to Hebrew minds, until one is forced to ask whether the result is Greek philosophy colored by the Hebrew affluent or whether the Bible contributes the main stream, though now it flows through Greek scenery.

The formulation of experience reacts upon experience, extending it, making effectual the control of the activities and forming new combinations. Ideas, it is true, gain their substance from that which the senses give, but once formed they dominate the mind and become more potent than the objects from which they derived their origin. If seeing is believing, as indubitably is it true that believing is seeing. Hence it is quite vain to attempt to separate religion from theology. Man must formulate his experience, and as he think-

eth in his heart so is he. Indeed theology, once formulated, creates experience, communicates it to others, forms a common type for multitudes, and perpetuates it from age to age. Modifications in theology affect experience, as a new experience may produce a new theology.

Emotions, however, extend themselves beyond the object which first excited them, and are undiscriminating. Reason, too, seeks ever wider fields, and theology annexes whole provinces which at first were foreign to its proper self. Then religious emotion, following in its wake, makes all become sacred. Men have found a veritable word of God in the Scriptures, sometimes in a single passage, and the emotion aroused has embraced the entire volume, Old Testament and New. When the first disciples believed in the crucified and risen Christ every part of the Old Testament became for them a Christian book testifying to this

one truth, and they wondered at the blindness which had kept them from seeing that which all the time had been before their eyes. It was plain at once that Christ fulfilled the law, that the ritual was the shadow of which he is the substance, and that all the prophets testified of him. When philosophy was converted, logic combined with a theory of history and cosmology, and the entire system received the sacred sanction. All theology is included in the divine evangel, so that attack upon any part is disloyalty to Christ, just as criticism of any part of the Bible is criticism of its divine author. At last the affirmation is made that a single error found in the sacred oracles would disprove their divine origin, and that any link displaced from the chain of logic would endanger salvation. Thus the circle is complete. It begins with the revelation, which converts the soul, then by logic and philosophy the experience is

formulated, and finally the experience is declared to rest upon theology, the facts upon their exposition and explanation.

Thus given dominion, theology hedges itself with obstacles and builds fences around the temple so that the unworthy may not approach the sacred place. It insists that its logic, its dogmas, its history and even its ontology are necessary parts of the truth, and that a soundly religious experience substantiates the entire construction. Disputes may arise upon minor points which thereby assume portentous importance and justify the formation of sects and the excommunication of heretics. The scribes insist that men must worship God "on this mountain" or "in Jerusalem" and condemn him who teaches that the Father seeks all who would worship Him in truth.

But no system of logic and philosophy can confine permanently men's minds. It

is clear that theology is open to attack from many sides, and that any system can mantain itself intact only while men remain with their general conceptions unchanged. When a new age in science or philosophy begins, theology must study its problems afresh. With the conservatism which belongs to religion, theology may resist all change, since men do not like to criticise that which is sacred. The new science is "falsely so called," and it is denounced in the name of God as godless, rationalistic, unbelieving, arrogant, destructive, new, while against it is arraigned the testimony of the great men of the past and the pious feelings of the present. When the new science is finally established however, theology may embrace it, accommodating this and that and stoutly maintaining that nothing is changed. As a further step science will then be incorporated in theology and religious truth clothed in its new garb, a

new theology being formed which in turn shall be subjected to the same process as knowledge broadens and advances. Or an attempted separation may be made between the two provinces, and that be asserted as true to faith which is admittedly false to science. Or, once more, theology may seek to find some saving remnant, omitting this, restating that, until a citadel is reached which shall be safe from foes. But theology may become new in a different way, — through a fresh experience. The religious life may make new organs for itself, either, as in the Reformation, affirming its return to a more primitive experience, or renouncing the historic name.

In the history of theology, however, there are personal equations to be taken into account, since the established system by no means satisfied all aspirations even in the "ages of faith," and since philosophy and logic appeal differently to different

minds. It is only from the safe distance of centuries that we can look back upon any epoch and view it as unruffled and at one. Besides most men are easily satisfied with doctrine, and the influence of theology is overemphasized. A mass of other influences determine how they shall think and what they shall believe. Though every man has implicitly a theology, as each has a philosophy, it is only the few who really comprehend the system. They set a standard under which the rest gather, often fighting in causes which they neither comprehend nor love.

In our day these difficulties are at the maximum. Men feel comparatively little respect for authority and will not submit to discipline. They flatter themselves that their judgments are their own. Conformity is not in fashion, and the title "heretic" has lost its terrors. Not before has there been such need to take the personal equa-

tion so into account. Moreover, history in the last fifty years has seen its greatest intellectual revolution; the universe has broadened and lengthened until no boundaries remain. Philosophy and logic are in a similar case of revolution, though in these realms none attempts to speak with certain voice. Hence students question their right to the Christian name, and the voices of their teachers are discordant, for no new theology commands large assent. Religion is threatened, the ecclesiastical order is discredited, and chaos seems come again. With many, therefore, the safest way is still the old truth, — not indeed in its fullness, but in bits and patches, with only here and there one who holds entire that which, a little while ago, was esteemed the faith.

When theology consciously breaks with the historic type it may turn in various directions, only three of which shall detain

us. To some men religious experience has burst the bonds of the historic faith and has come out into a larger place. The intellectual movement of our time occupies the largest place in their minds, so that theology must conform to science and reason prepare a way for faith. The teachings of science surpass the most inspired fancies of the prophets and poets. The earth has become the universe. God can no longer be pictured under the old forms of King or Father. He is the infinite, the absolute, and religion is man's "attitude to the whole." Humanity struggles towards Him, the historic religions being records of its progress; so that while "religions are many, religion is one." The prophets of the past were men in whom burned a divine fire, and the fire is not quenched, but renewed, from age to age. We may describe the light as we see it, and as freely as they described the vision God gave to them. Sci-

ence deals with appearances, but religion opens the door to ultimate reality, which is the substance of all passing forms. It abides, while they are rolled up as a garment and perish. Reason is man's highest prerogative, making him akin to God, and through it the Highest is revealed. A pure intellectual love of God is salvation, and with its attainment we are one with Him. Monism has a select following, and it claims kinship with a long list of philosophic saints, without and within the church.

A larger group seek Him through the emotions. We are told that the "sub-conscious" is purer than our ordinary consciousness, and that through it God communicates with man. It is not the intellect but the feelings which introduce us to reality. Of it all else is symbolic, and must be left behind in the experience of immediacy. In feelings only are we directly conscious of the Divine with a certainty

which cannot be questioned nor communicated. Only they who thus know God can be certain of Him. Theology disappears, not because disproved, but because the experience renders it valueless.

Or, once more, wearied with this search for the infinite and the absolute, whether the feelings or the intellect be invoked, others turn to the practical sphere. Not in speculation or in dreams, but in activity, is God found, — "the daily round, the common task" offering

> all we need to ask,
> Room to deny ourselves, a road
> To bring us daily nearer God.

The universe in its inner structure is beyond human knowledge, and emotions may be wrongly interpreted. Moreover, such dreams lead no whither save to separate us from our fellows. Far other was the Glad Tidings which came to the "little ones," and whose preachers were not philosophers

or mystics, but plain men of the people. Let us bring philosophy back to earth, like Socrates and Kant, and religion once more to the ignorant, the outcasts, the slaves, like Paul. God supplies man's needs, and his true servants are concerned not so much with hymning his praises as with the relief of humanity, — the common humanity which suffers from the illness of body, mind, and soul. The soul cries out for the living God, who wipes away tears and bears the burdens of the common life. The prayer Christ taught is for the daily bread, and faith looks for immediate succor instead of seeking post-mortem bliss. The rest is pure luxury for petted groups, endowed with leisure to consider their "attitude to the universe as a whole"! It matters little whether the universe be pluralistic or monistic, or God be one or many, or a power among powers seeking our help in the struggle against evil. Any

theology will avail if it works, for only by its fruits shall the truth be known.

Theology is far from death or sleep. If we take it in its larger sense, men are keen for its problems and their solutions. It is authority which has waned, so that it is looked upon as useful only for the immature and ignorant. Hence there is uncertainty, and again men ask, What is truth, and where shall it be found?

III

IS CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE UNIFORM?

CHRISTIANITY in its broadest definition is the religion of all those who call Jesus, Lord. It includes all types of religious experience, but marks them with characteristics of its own. Its denominations have a common heritage of history and doctrine, which gives them a unity in the midst of their wide diversities.

For fifteen centuries the Occident has been monotheistic, believing in one God, all wise, all powerful, self-existent, all holy, all good, Creator, Preserver, Ruler of the Universe. His infinity separates Him from men, yet the earth is the scene of his constant and miraculous intervention. The physical forces of the world are only secondary causes, moved by his will, so that

He truly makes the sun to rise and the rain to fall. He watches over individuals, and answers prayers by special providence. He has shaped history for man's redemption, giving a law, revealing his will by prophets and apostles, and appearing in the fullness of time on earth, incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. Before Him all men shall appear in the final day of the world's history. Those who put their trust in Him shall be admitted to his presence, a salvation which includes all blessedness, while they who reject Him shall be banished, a fate which includes all misery.

Salvation is thus essentially unworldly, the earth the scene for the tragedy of God and the human soul. The divine word prevails: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" In comparison with the issues of the eternal destiny, the earthly life is worthless — of value only as a preparation for

the reality beyond. The citizenship of the Christian is in heaven, and his thoughts are centred there.

With these ideas there is a common type of experience, of fear of God and punishment and of a hope for escape through Christ the Saviour. This hope is variously mediated in different communions, so that detailed attempts to describe the Christian experience are rightfully open to the charge of sectarian narrowness. Yet we venture to describe one type, that which for one hundred and fifty years has been called the Evangelical, and which in substance is found under many other names.

As in all Protestantism, it is individualistic: the doctrines of the faith are to be realized in the consciousness, and the drama of the redemption is to be the experience of every Christian. By nature a man is depraved, justly condemned to eternal woe and insensible to his condition.

The world and its interests fill his thoughts and employ his will. If he join in public worship, it is as he joins in other associations of the community; and if he feel at times an elevation of spirit, it is æsthetic or social and not truly religious. When aroused from this condition, he is like a man awakened from sleep to the knowledge of deadly danger. God is no longer an abstraction nor a tradition, but is immediately known. The soul is as certain of Him as of its own existence, — a Presence invisible and inaudible, but manifest to the spiritual sense. Were this knowledge of God all, Christianity would be a message of despair, and we the most miserable of men. But the law is only a dark background on which is revealed the gospel, the glad tidings of great joy. "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." For God is both King and Re-

deemer. In many ways He revealed this unto the fathers, and He made it clear in the life and death of Jesus Christ. Christ is at once our brother and Son of God. By a divine act he became man, sharing our sorrows, and he took upon himself the punishment of our sin. Having offered a perfect sacrifice upon the cross, he rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of God. He is the pledge of redemption, the instrument of his Father's love.

"Redemption, however, is not a mechanical thing, — "opus operatum," — for it works by faith. Faith consists of the confession that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and of the appropriation of his saving acts. The gospel becomes the dominant factor in the consciousness, for only they who know their need can appreciate so great redemption. Hence first is the preaching of the law, and afterwards the gospel. First is despair

beneath God's wrath, and afterward the joy of pardon. With it the consciousness of salvation is complete, but conflict is not at an end. Too deeply had sin entered into the substance of man's being to be cast out without further struggle. Henceforth life is a fight against sin, with alternations of triumph and defeat. But the Christian has assurance of success, since God works within him to will and do of his good pleasure. The Father will not desert his own, for whom Christ died, but sends his Spirit into their hearts, transforming their substance and making them sons of God. From this new nature flow good affections and deeds. Thus is salvation, in part realized now, and to be consummated in heaven.

Such an experience carries its own credentials. A profound emotion transforms the world, renews the soul, and changes the course of life. The old desires and appetites pass away, a new character being formed

opposed to the old. It is the second birth of a new personality, to which the old appears strange, the past related to the present only by a memory. This experience works righteousness, fills lives with peace and the sense of God's presence, and redeems hopeless men and women.

But the strength of the emotions thus called forth result in depression. Life cannot continue at such a height. The soul, feeling it is deserted by God, accuses itself of sin against the Spirit. Life alternates between hope and despair, joy and sorrow. Sometimes the emotional state becomes the chief concern, and religion is predominantly introspective. When the experience is vivid it extends itself from soul to soul. It claims exclusive right to the Christian name, and looks for a conversion of the world in the same fashion. It believes that God's power has worked this miracle, for the soul feels itself seized by a superhuman

power. As the emotion takes possession of a community, there is a revival of religion; but as with the individual, so with the crowd. The emotion cannot continue, and a depressed condition succeeds when all appeals are in vain. Sometimes a generation must pass before religious experience can again become powerful.

Moreover, some personalities are not susceptible to this appeal, while others are too susceptible. The latter by an unconscious imitation reproduce the emotional manifestations. The former are left untouched, and may doubt either the reality of their own religious life or of all religious life. The experience seeks to base itself upon the religious experience of Paul; but not all the apostles had the same experience, and "God reveals himself in many ways." Thus, when this experience is made normative, the doctrine based upon it ceases to be the gospel for mankind and becomes the gospel for the

emotionally elect. In our day the tradition and the doctrine remain, but the power is gone. The experience itself appears out of date and strange. Children grow into religious experience as into intellectual — normally — from childhood through youth to maturity. Evangelical phrases are retained, to be sure, but even in conservative pulpits preachers no longer set themselves to the task of convicting men of sin. So little is a vivid experience expected that men are considered unconscious Christians, though they make no profession of the change of heart. It is significant of the change in the meaning of the words, for how can an experience be unconscious if it consist in repentance for sin and trust in the merits of Christ alone for salvation! It is evident that conversion has lost its meaning.

The difference between the child of God and the moral, respectable child of the world is only one in degree. Religion, in-

deed, returns to the state called natural, and the Protestant experience reverts to the type of the mother church, for the membership is recruited from the children of believers in regular succession, and beyond this circle social conditions are more important than religious convictions in determining denominational constituencies. Comparatively few are brought into the church from the "world," and church union appears feasible because interest in the points once thought all important has waned.

A confession of faith implies no longer the personal experience of the divine tragedy of a lost soul, redeemed by the cross and the risen Saviour, but the acceptance, on the strength of church tradition, of the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and a general agreement with the ecclesiastical organization.

In religious circles this condition is re-

cognized with deep concern. It is true that the experience we have described is still known in its fullness by some persons, while others insist that it is an extreme type and not truly representative. But it will scarcely be denied that some approximation to this thoroughgoing conviction of sin and complete trust in the merits of the Saviour is representative of the event we call conversion, nor that the complaint of a waning religious power is general. Often it is urged that the old gospel be preached anew, but these appeals accomplish little, since though they be followed in form, the convictions which gave power to the preaching of Wesley, Edwards, Nettleton, and Finney are wanting. Even Moody did not preach the law, and his gospel was not theirs. It is the love of God and his mercy for all men which now have first place. The old gospel is not preached because conditions beyond the control of

popes, or bishops, or general assemblies shape men's thoughts and determine their belief. The attitude of mind which made the old appeals effective is gone. This world is not a "desert drear," and even churchmen are not other-worldly-minded. For the first time in history the multitudes believe in progress and look forward with eager expectation. How important this is I shall not attempt to show; but a combination of causes — the progress of science, the never-ceasing inventions, the increase of wealth from the exploitation of virgin continents, man's new control of nature — combine to create an interest in the world which theology is powerless to combat. Man cannot look upon himself as totally depraved and dependent upon superhuman aid. It is the triumph of reason which has given him command over the forces of nature, and not magic nor miracles nor prayer. In an age which has evolution

for its scientific formula, man is not fallen, but risen from helplessness, ignorance, and a brute inheritance. He cannot regard himself as totally depraved when he is no longer under tutors and governors but rules himself. As never before, the voice of the people is the voice of God, for it determines right and wrong as it makes law. It is the common belief that when the issue is clearly joined the people will decide aright, and in any case they will decide. Man is not now *under* authority, but he wills authority. In a democratic age the older reverence and obedience are forgotten. We are all free, equal, with inherent rights, and we no longer recognize the divine right of king or church. Men cease to think of God as king, for they no longer know what king means. With the kingly government gone, vindicatory justice disappears, and the greatest good of the greatest number takes its place. The law does not seek vengeance, but the reform of

the criminal and the protection of society. Especially in our insistence upon the responsibility of the individual does a vicarious punishment appear foreign and even barbarous, and from it the American in China or other lands where it still exists must be protected by extra-territoriality. There is a wide feeling of sympathy and brotherliness which extends to the outcast and the criminal, so that the idea that the saved in heaven find an added joy in the contemplation of the sufferings of the lost is repugnant and impossible. While the doctrine of a vicarious punishment becomes increasingly incomprehensible, the ideas of sympathetic fellowship and service are widely influential, so that to many persons of ethical sensibility the thought of a personal salvation apart from the redemption of society has no attraction.

In its condemnation of Modernism the Church of Rome has firmly denied the

right and validity of these movements in society, which yet it can neither stop nor control. It decrees that the theology of the twelfth century shall be the theology of the twentieth, and it states more emphatically than ever its claims to a divine authority, — claims which it cannot enforce and to which the world pays little attention. Still less can Protestant churches succeed in such an attempt. Their fundamental appeal to the experience of the individual now bears full fruit, and they rightfully claim the modern movement as in part their own. So with them the questions press for answers. Must men in the church deny what they are taught in the university, and affirm that which science forces them to deny ? Has the gospel of Jesus Christ no effective appeal to this progressive, optimistic, scientific, democratic age ? Or must men be freed from the modern spirit before they can be filled with the spirit of Christ? Is other-

worldly-mindedness the only alternative to worldly-mindedness, or may men believe in a new earth in which dwelleth Christian love, a world filled with the spirit of God?

We have all too briefly sketched the religious situation, and we have failed in our purpose if it is not plain that a restudy and a restatement of fundamental Christian truth is necessary. Many earnest men and women are not satisfied with the traditional forms of worship, nor with the traditional theology, nor with the traditional Christian experience. They might well use the words of Amos: there is "a famine . . . of hearing the words of the Lord," for they "wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east," they "run to and fro to seek the word of the Lord" and do "not find it." Christians who are content with the older forms and statements and experience reproach them as being irreligious, and

many persons suppose that religion itself is in danger. But the reproaches and the fears are needless. It is not a time for mutual reproaches, but for an understanding. There are causes at work which are not of the will of men, and forces which are not subject to their control. It is a day for men of differing views to say, "Come now, and let us reason together!" It is a time, not for discouragement, but for hope. It is because religion is of man's nature that it cannot pass away, and for the same reason that it cannot remain unchanged. We who are of the church, rejoicing in its past and participating in its present, have no fears that the Spirit of Christ will desert it.

The gospel of Jesus Christ has not lost its power. It is deeply throned in the hearts of millions. It cannot pass away. It has gone through many changes in many ages and many lands, and itself has been changed in the process. So it will be again, as it shall

prove itself in the new age the power of God unto salvation. Doubtless in the future, as in the past, many forms of religious experience will find a place under the common name. Ecclesiastical censures have lost their power and excommunication its terrors. Only one's self can exclude one's self from the right to the Christian name. And each must utter the truth as he knows it, for only in the freest discussion can the common truth be reached. It is in such a spirit that I venture to set forth once more the gospel of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.

IV

JESUS THE MESSIAH

When confused by the conflicting claims of sects and individuals to the possession of the truth of any great master, we turn from all advocates to him whose name they bear, as to the supreme Judge from whom there is no appeal. So in the multitude of Buddhist sects, discordant and assertive, we seek the words of Gautama and ask which, if any, may be true to the doctrine he proclaimed. Exact reproduction we shall not seek. Doubtless every living word is a seed cast into the ground which gathers to itself forces from earth and air and sun, so that the germ does not contain the whole, but only the power and prophecy of the perfected fruit. In religion we should expect this; and the cry which has been

raised more than once, "Back to Confucius," or "Back to Christ," may not mean a mere return to the message in its first form. But this it surely will mean — that the development shall not contradict the source, that it shall make chief what the master made chief, with other matters in a just subordination. It is when systems call themselves by the common name, and yet reject the essential truth for which the master lived, that they forfeit their right to the inheritance. No doubt, in the endless variety of men and times much shall be added, and some things overlooked, or cast knowingly aside; but for the essence we must go to him.

Thus we turn to Jesus; not to the creeds, nor to the theologians, nor even to the earliest disciples. Perhaps these may emphasize aright, and if so we shall be the more rewarded in our search; and if they differ, with whatever sadness we must still

reject their witness, since Christians may not contradict the Christ.

Even a cursory view shows that the earliest writers were not agreed on every point, and that there were differences in titles, in estimates of value, and in emphasis. Peter was not wholly at one with Paul, nor James with either, nor does the Johannine Christ make the same impression as Jesus of the Synoptic gospels. It is a many-sided estimate which we get, in part determined by a varying tradition, in part by selective affinity, in part by the differing religious experiences. Already in the New Testament it is apparent that Christianity is to make appeal to differing minds in many differing ways.

Modern scholarship, with limitless labor, has sought to show us Jesus as he walked among men and taught them. The very differences in the traditions aid the attempt; and though our sources are all too scanty,

still we may discern his features and hear his words. Much is left uncertain which we desire determined, but there is little room to doubt as to the gospel which he proclaimed.

No prophet or founder of a religion sets forth a teaching which is altogether new. He is a reflection of his age, and repeats the message of the holy men of old. In every sphere the extremest radical is conservative in the largest portion of his life and thought, while in religion the reformer rejoices to declare that his has been the ancient doctrine, long distorted or forgotten but now again set forth. Christianity least of all has questioned the formative influences of the prophets of the Hebrew faith, for it has taken the Old Testament as a Christian book, declaring that the gospel is latent in the Old Testament and made manifest in the New. Jesus is not a critic nor an iconoclast, but he comes to "fulfill." The commandments

are God's law, the temple is God's house, and the prophets are God's messengers. So completely did Jesus dwell within the boundaries of his people that there is no indication that he was influenced by the traditions or the learning of other lands. With these lands and their people he comes in contact only in an incidental way. He was a man of one book, trained in it from childhood, and familiar with its text and with its spirit.

His knowledge of the larger world of men was as limited as his knowledge of its learning. He was a plain man of the plain people, dwelling with workingmen and supporting himself by the labor of his hands. Hence he does not speak as a scholar, nor as a cosmopolitan, nor as a statesman or aristocrat, but as one of the common people, with whom his life is bound up and whose fortunes and ways of thought he shared.

The common people have certain advantages of an educational sort, for they know

men at first hand, and not through intermediaries, — servants or books, — or afar off as separated by rank and wealth. They are not made artificial by etiquette and secretive by refinement, but they are an open book, more interesting to each other than written books, and more instructive. They are not of the nature of the recluse who thinks the presence of his fellows an intrusion, nor of the philanthropist who condescendingly gives those who lie at his gate the crumbs which fall from his table. They share each other's burdens and hopes and fears and sorrows; for to be sick, heavy-laden, anxious, hungry, homeless, in prison, is a common lot, which may come to any one.

With Jews the family was the chief social group, a tiny coöperative commonwealth, the type of all larger groups. The nation was thought of in the same terms, having a common parentage and being

united by inheritance and destiny. Traditions gave the consciousness of the past which was needed, and belief in God, the God of the fathers, invested all with a sacred significance, — a belief which affected the whole life, since our modern distinctions were not existent. The world was filled with supernatural agencies, the immediate causes of good and evil. Demons were sources of the evils of the common life, and exorcism and magic expelled and controlled them. God, too, was an immediate factor in every-day existence, sending suffering as punishment and happiness as a reward. All natural phenomena were under his control, so that in the most literal sense He made the sun rise and the rain descend, and for the direct punishment of individuals might cause a tower to fall, or a man to be born blind, or the wrath of a ruler to visit him, for He moved the hearts of men as He moved the objects of nature.

The distinction between the natural and the supernatural was not made, for the idea of "nature" did not exist. Hence there were no miracles in the modern sense. That a man should rise from the dead was so credible that Herod, when he heard of the healings of Jesus, as his first hypothesis suggested that it was John the Baptist, — whose head was cut off. Wonders and signs indicated some superhuman agency, good or bad. Witnesses were seldom cross-examined, nor was evidence in the scientific sense required. All things were possible and credible.

With this practical view of religion was associated a simple theology. God was indeed Creator, but chiefly He was the helper of the people in every-day affairs. He was King of kings, but in an especial sense God of Israel. This made still more terrible the Roman dominion, for why should the God of Israel permit that his people should

be in disgrace and suffering while heathen nations were exalted? In part, doubtless, it was for the sins of the people, which also accounted for demoniacal possession, and in part it was merely a mysterious and temporary dispensation until the coming of the Messiah, who with divine powers should overwhelm the enemies of God and of his people, and introduce an everlasting reign of peace, righteousness, and joy. These Messianic dreams were the consolation of the people, sustaining their courage and maintaining their faith in the midst of trials. Descriptions of the New Jerusalem excited their desires, and there was study of the ancient oracles for the determination of the times and the seasons appointed by God for the restoration of the kingdom to Israel, so that impostors found a following by proclaiming themselves Messiahs. This popular religion had little connection with the refinements of theology and ritual, which

were left to the scholars and the priests, though the people joined in the great national festivals, and, doubtless, at a distance looked with reverence upon the more exalted representatives of organized religion. They, for their part, despised the people, and counted them accursed for not knowing and obeying a law which in its minutiæ was a yoke too heavy for the common man.

The religion of the Pharisees indeed laid great stress on the doing of God's will, and in this the poor were at one with them. The festivals were observed and the sacrifices offered because God so commanded, and beyond this it was not necessary to inquire. And yet between the common man and the man who was pious by profession there was a difference. In theory neither made a clear distinction between the ceremonial and the moral law; but the former laid stress upon the ethics which have to do with human

relations, and the latter still more upon rites and sacraments. It is the scholars and priests who are punctilious, and who have time to frame theories of "sin." The plain man knows sins, but not sin. He readily excuses much which a greater refinement condemns, and excepting under passion he is not insistent about punishment, caring nothing at all for the maintenance of the majesty of the law. The sin which he most deeply resents is oppression by the powerful and the rich, for this embitters his daily lot.

Helpfulness is the great virtue, born of instincts which are of the family, and the sex relations, and of the compassionate sympathy which comes from daily contact. Primitive man has his being in the group, and his interests are bound up with it to a degree which we scarcely understand. To give all which one has is not uncommon generosity among folks whose all is very

little. The conception of righteousness is far enough from our notions of a rigid law and its strict enactment. Indeed, among the Old Testament prophets the ideal of the righteous king was not that of one who maintained justice in our modern sense, a sense still unknown, but of the compassionate and merciful ruler, the defender of the fatherless, who would compel the rich to help out of their abundance and would exalt the poor and needy.

Such righteousness, to be sure, fails strangely on occasions, as do also the virtues of the poor, their kindness alternating with hardness and even cruelty, for nature is scarcely to be trusted until it is trained and made purposeful and intelligent.

From such a world came Jesus, born and bred in it, partaking of its ideas and living its life. He did not come to it, but he came from it, a man among his fellow men. He was not a mysterious and awful oracle

shrouded in mystery, nor a voice crying in the wilderness like John the Baptist, nor an apparition like Elijah, nor a statesman like Jeremiah, nor a seer of strange visions like Ezekiel, — and he was at the furthest remove from the frenzy of soothsayers and seers. The people knew whence he was, — the son of Joseph and Mary, with his brothers and sisters in the community. Was he not the carpenter, and did not that mean that he labored with his hands, building, repairing, eating the bread and sleeping the sleep of the laborer?

It is impossible to overemphasize the oneness of Jesus with his time and his people, unless in so doing we overlook that which in him was different, for it was this difference that made the carpenter to be Christ the Saviour. Nor are we able precisely to define the difference; and it is easier to give him some great title, such as Messiah or Son of God, and let it stand in

lieu of an understanding. But we may be able to see a little beneath the surface.

We have spoken of the virtues of the poor as instinctive; with Jesus they became purposeful and in the highest sense controlling. He understood at once himself, his aims, and the changes in the character of other men and, through them, in the whole social order which he would accomplish. His aims were not for himself, for power and fame and recognition, but he desired social and universal results. His terms were those of the common people, but he filled those terms with new meaning, or better, he made apparent and brought to full consciousness the meanings which they instinctively contained.

The family is by nature the social unit, and Jesus makes its terms dominate the whole series of his conceptions. God is the father, not the king. Though he habitually uses the term "kingdom," yet he gives the

word a new meaning; for his Father's kingdom is not like that of the nations, in which the great ones have lordship, but in it the chief is the servant of all. What have simple folks to do with kings? It is they who wear soft raiment who are in kings' houses. King is a term which separates and makes remote, but God draws near when "Father" is the title by which he is addressed. The ceremonial language of ritual and formal prayers, with the pomp and circumstance and devices of priests, are at once rendered obsolete. Jesus teaches to pray in the simple language of every day for daily needs, not in archaic words invested with mysterious power. Whole masses of theology, too, are swept away, — the things concerning which learned men dispute. How is it possible for God, who is infinite justice, to forgive sins? The Father forgives as in the parable of the Prodigal Son; as Jesus forgave, — "Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." How

does God forgive? As we forgive, as we also have forgiven our debtors. It is true there is a store of wrath, but it is poured out upon those who oppress the Father's little ones, binding heavy burdens upon their shoulders which they are not able to bear, and thus closing the Kingdom of God to them. The harlots and the outcasts go in before these professionally pious ones.

The desire of God is that men should be his true sons, and this is the chief aim of Jesus' teaching. He would not compel obedience, but he would awaken the same purpose which impelled himself. His disciples are to be sons of the Father, not by virtue of a metaphysical relationship for which he cared nothing, nor because God created them, but by virtue of a moral enthusiasm, loving as the Father loves, forgiving as He forgives, forbearing as He forbears, and serving as He serves. And all this for the unloving and ungrateful, without

expecting anything in return, for He makes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends his rain on the just and on the unjust. Jesus puts no limits on his own eagerness to serve, and he would have his disciples like himself in devotion, taking up the cross as he took up the cross, and, as John puts it, being one with God as Jesus is one with Him.

As Jesus thus seeks not to lay down a code of laws but to form character, he sets forth his principle in parables, paradoxes, and with the humor of the prophet who is in deepest earnest. He does not utter commonplaces which any one may repeat, for he demands complete devotion. It is not an easy thing to be his disciple, for he asks the same radical, revolutionary self-sacrificing spirit which animated himself. He did not teach in the least like a moral philosopher who weighs the precept, the situation, and the words, but with the unrestrained

enthusiasm of the prophet through whom God speaks. He would have the supreme virtue, regardless of common sense and the limits of ordinary natures. To love one's family and those who love us — every one does that; but to love our enemies, those who defame and persecute us, to love the unloving and the unlovable — to do the impossible — this is the way of the children of the Father. Thus, and thus only, does Jesus describe God's perfection, and thus only are his children to share in it.

In the nature of the case such teaching cannot terminate in the individual, but involves society and its reconstruction. It is not self-contemplative, introspective, anxiously inquiring about its own salvation; for its gaze is fixed on others, and its supreme desire is to serve. Strong as is his emphasis upon individual discipleship, this is directed to the larger end. It is true he does not conceive of the kingdom as the outcome of

his disciples' efforts, but as the miraculous result of the immediate work of God; and yet he thinks of the kingdom of the Father as present, for where is the Spirit there is the kingdom, and we are not anxiously to search for the signs of its coming, for it is already among us. He does not anticipate its promotion through the discovery of new forms for society, and he has nothing to say of political or industrial constitutions and conditions. Not at all is he committed to any theory, socialistic or individualistic, as to the world and the fashion of it. His kingdom is composed of men who make compassionate sympathy the ruling motive, who are convinced that with this as primary they are in accordance with the Heavenly Father and are his sons. Such men are far from seeking their own advancement and happiness, for by definition they labor for those about them, so that a great mass of philanthropic endeavor accompanies them.

This, indeed, is largely the sign of their discipleship, that they heal as the Master heals. But still more, accompanying this as the spirit accompanies the body, inspiring it, directing it, being the real factor, is the eager inner life which, fully conscious at once of its relation to God and its relation to men, understands that the Divine Kingdom in its essential nature is nothing else than the possession of such a life by all men. The supreme aim is, therefore, not the healing of men's bodies, or the mending of their fortunes, but the conversion of their souls. For nothing else is comparable to this, that men should be the sons of the Father; and to become a son of God is an ethical achievement, an entering into the Father's purpose, precisely as an earthly son of earthly parents, grown to maturity, enters into his father's life purpose and becomes for the first time completely a son. This is a unity for which all other unities

are instrumental, existing for the sake of such oneness of sympathy and purpose.

With this revaluation of the individual, which makes the inner life supreme and divine sonship to consist in this attitude of mind and life, is also a revaluation of society.

Jesus was not a revolutionist, nor a reformer with a programme. He was not interested in political or economic theory. He summoned men to a new life of sympathetic activity, and he looked for a transformation of the nation in the coming of the Kingdom. This should come through the same mighty power which Jesus felt in his soul. He did not think of a gradual civilizing of the world with a slow advance in morals, knowledge, and religion, but he looked to his Father who should accomplish this work. Yet not without men. Jesus does not discuss the relations of God's will to man's, predestination and freedom; but he speaks in simple expression of his own experience, for he was

forced to work the works of his Father while it was day. As modern scholars state natural laws, so does he state the spiritual. All may understand it, but it operates independently whether we agree or disagree. Philosophy may make it luminous and history illustrate it, but they can neither establish nor abrogate it. It needs essentially not sacrament nor ritual, nor ecclesiastical organization. It is as simple as the life of the family, as the intercourse of farmers, artisans, and laborers. It is the social law of gravitation, operating before it is understood, and when explained opening before men a new heaven and a new earth. It is the only way to happiness, and in it is the power of the universe itself, the ultimate power which men call God.

Jesus does not put it under the categories of the state. His ideal is not a republic like Plato's, but the family extended to all mankind. His use of the family terms must

have been constant, so often do they recur in the brief fragments of his teaching which have come to us: "Father," "my Father," "your Father"; and of men, "my brethren"; and of those who are one with him, "my mother," "my sister," "my brother." The illustration of man's relation to God is in the parable of the Prodigal Son; and he is truly neighbor who acts like the Good Samaritan. Jesus is among men as one who serves, and he will call his followers friends. There is no note of the domineering and self-seeking habit of mind, which separates and causes men to look at each other askance. To the lawyer who glibly quotes the twofold law of God he says nothing of greater diligence in worship, but tells him to go and serve men in distress; and this is characteristic, for in no instance does he speak of service to God without putting service to our fellows first as the essential thing.

The order of the prayer he taught his disciples is most significant. First, that the name he loved, Father, should be adored; second, that the Kingdom should come on earth and the will of the Father here be done, and only third, that our individual needs should be satisfied. This, like all his teaching, reveals his own character.

The most glorious mystic vision on the mount of transfiguration could not detain Jesus while a suffering youth awaited his coming. Frequent as were his own retreats into solitude for prayer, they were for the strength needed for his ministry to man's needs, and might be interrupted when the suffering multitude followed, seeking for his aid. And finally, not to requote the whole gospel, when he describes the great judgment day, and himself as judge, the same principle controls. There is no theological or ecclesiastical test, nothing of that which the church calling itself by his

name has warred about and made condition for fellowship, but his one great principle penetrates all. Even in his glory he is identified still with those in prison, with the sick, the hungry, the naked, the homeless, friendless multitude, "these my brethren." His friends welcomed to his presence are they who have helped the helpless ones, while those who have hardened their hearts to their brother's cry are banished from his presence though they eagerly call Jesus Lord.

The other side of the picture makes the same impression. He was not the effeminate, unmoved being so often represented in hymns and pictures, for he had an oriental store of wrath. But it was not for those who did not recognize him, or had doubts about the origin and metaphysical nature of his being, nor for those who did not do him honor, nor was it even for the sinners of the streets and slums, but for

those who injured others and who supposed that injury to men could be atoned for by worship of God. It was unloosed when men used the temple service as a source of private gain, making his Father's house a den of thieves, or when ritual observances were thought more important than the relief of suffering, the keeping of the Sabbath ceremonially holy as of greater consequence than the healing of the sick. His wrath was for men who devoured widows' houses and made long prayers, for those who bound heavy burdens on others, which they themselves refused to carry, and for those who, intent on ritual and ceremony, passed by on the other side when they saw men naked and wounded unto death. The sin which has no forgiveness is not blasphemy of the Son, but the ascription of works of loving sympathy to the Devil. This is indeed to put evil for good and good for evil, to be followers of Jehovah in name but of Satan in fact.

The ethics of Jesus describe the God whom he worshiped. It is often said that his words contain no theology, and that we must go to Paul or to John or to the Church Fathers for it. That is true if formal discussion of abstractions is meant, or the systematic arrangement of the material which a world picture represents. But through his teaching and his life is one principle revealed far more clearly than in doctrines and dogmas. All is consistent, every word full of meaning; but the consistency and the meaning are of complete simplicity which sees one truth and sees it whole. It is the theology of the family, and to that does all conform, — man, duty, worship, love, and God. He drew from the Old Testament those teachings which are precisely to the point, and the rest he passed by. Because his emphasis is so continual and so exclusive, he transforms even these sayings. Nothing can be more beautiful than some of the

words of the prophets, not even the words of Jesus; but he omits all else and sets his truth by itself so that the meaning cannot be mistaken. "Father" becomes the only name for God, and its ethical significance is in every way enforced and illustrated. Just once does he use "Lord of Heaven and Earth," and then as secondary to "Father," indicating the power which at last should make the whole family at home with him, in peace, — the revelation which had been hidden from the wise but is revealed to the babes.

With Jesus theory and practice, doctrine and conduct, are one. He has no interest in belief about that which has no reference to life. Faith is always practical, resulting in activity; for otherwise it is mere opinion, tradition, or fancy. He trusted in the Father, and he slept undisturbed in the midst of the storm. "Why are ye fearful? Have ye not yet faith?" Why are ye anxious for rai-

ment, for food? Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things! Seek ye the kingdom and its righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Know that God is Father, and theology is complete Have faith in Him, and his peace shall take possession of the heart.

So far as we may judge from the words which have come down to us, the gospel of Jesus was complete from the beginning of his ministry. With all his enthusiasm there is nothing in it of momentary impulse, nothing which is inconsistent. Peasant as he was, it is wholly wrong to think of him as what we call simple-minded. Both what he includes and what he omits are from purpose. He was not led on by events to his conclusions, for his was a self-consciousness of the clearest and highest. As with his teaching, so with his estimate of himself. A Hebrew, he had the Hebrew tradition behind him, not the tradition of

men of the twentieth century, and he judged himself by standards which are not ours. Therefore it was that his teaching was not after the modern manner, but with authority, commanding and rebuking with the voice of God.

For the prophetic consciousness is seized by a higher power, inspired, possessed, and its utterances are not its own. The Divine Spirit compels the man often to a message which he is reluctant to receive, but whether he wills to speak or to be silent, proclaim it he must. The personality is overshadowed so that peasants may rebuke kings. Yet they speak not as angels, — as messengers, that is, from another sphere, — but as a part of that which they depict, and as involved in the catastrophes which they foretell. They are a spectacle to men, but they endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Their sole justification is in the event.

This God-consciousness belonged to Jesus

in the highest degree. He did not balance texts against texts, nor laboriously argue and explain; but without hesitation his expression was "Amen! I say unto you!" If any sacred word of old contradicted him, he abrogated it, or contradicted it, or declared that it had been given for a temporary purpose. No book, however sacred, no law, though written by the finger of God on tables of stones, no temple, though in its most holy place Jehovah had his dwelling, could command or silence him. The power of the Father held him, and the Father was revealed in and to him, so that none knew the Father — not prophet, nor lawgiver — save the Son, and he to whom the Son revealed Him.

In this consciousness that God was in him, he went far beyond the prophets. He was the one of whom they spake. The people waited for the Messiah, and Jesus declared himself to be he. For we misin-

terpret him if we think of him as a man, who had reached certain conclusions and who set himself the task of persuading others. He commands with an imperial self-consciousness. It is to men like Alexander and Cæsar and Napoleon that we must look would we understand Jesus; for his consciousness was that, and more than that, even the consciousness of God. He could call men to leave and follow him. He could declare that he who loved father or mother more than him were not worthy of him. He could bid the ruler put aside his rank and give his wealth to charity. He could face the mob and pass unharmed through its very midst. Layman and theologian, priest and chief priest, Herod the King and Pontius Pilate embodying the imperial power, were to listen and obey. If men did not listen, it was because Satan had hardened their hearts; and if they believed, it was because the same divine power by

which he spake had entered into them. His works allowed for no delay. In them the destinies of the soul and of the world were involved. "Let the dead bury their dead," he cried, and "follow thou me!" To reject him on any plea was doom, death, outer darkness; for his authority was not to be doubted or questioned, as it was the authority of the Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, and he who spake was the anointed one, the Christ of God.

It is only with this comprehension of the consciousness of Jesus that we can understand his work. On every hand it pressed him to an alternative. From the beginning he saw the opposition which his message would call forth, and indeed he did not hesitate to call it forth. He did not soften or compromise, for he was convinced that the men who sat in Moses' seat misguided the people to their destruction. His denunciations were as full of intense emotion as

were his calls to discipleship. The conflict could not be avoided; for though they worshiped the same God in name, they differed at every point. To Jesus it seemed that what he loved they hated. To the Pharisee God was supersensitive, jealous, punishing his people because they were not exact in following the ceremony — the etiquette — which He had established; an oriental monarch who ruled rigorously. He was called, indeed, the Father of his people, and He enforced social righteousness; but still more did He insist upon the ritual, for its neglect or profanation was an affront to his majesty, while injury to one's neighbor only did wrong to man. Jesus came into conflict with this conception at every point. He violated the pious etiquette of the Pharisees, and when they denounced him as possessed by Satan he turned upon them as blasphemers of the Spirit. In this irreconcilable conflict the rulers appealed to force.

With that in view what should be his procedure, and to what labor should he give himself? His answer is the most complete embodiment of his gospel, both on the positive and the negative side. For him whose kingdom is of this world certain courses are plain. Jesus followed none of them. He gave his precious time, a few months at most, to healing, to works of mercy, and of blessing. Even his teaching could not interrupt his self-imposed task. The Son of God must do the works of the Father while it is day, and the works of the Father are not military preparation nor councils of war, but deeds of love, pity, compassion, and healing. Greater than his words was his life of saving activity. And on the negative side he would not give way to the opposite principle. He would not show a sign from heaven to convince men who could not see the divinity of acts of pity and love. He would not permit his disciples to call down

fire from heaven, like the ancient prophet, to destroy those who refused to receive him; he would not pray his Father for miraculous aid in his extremity; he rebuked Peter for drawing the sword in his defense. He enunciated his principle at the Last Supper. "The kings of the Gentiles have lordship over them, and they that have authority over them are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so; but he that is greater among you, let him become as the younger, and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat or he that serveth? But I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." The revelation of his Father held him true to the end. Wrath begets wrath, and only love begets love. They who draw the sword perish by the sword. He would permit no exception in his case.

We are not permitted to think of him as enduring the evil which came upon him as a stoic, without sign of emotion, and with

absolute self-control. Not such an one was Jesus, and such do not found religions nor make multitudes their devoted followers. To be cursed, spoken evil of, mistreated, mocked, struck, falsely accused, condemned, followed by a cursing mob to the most ignominious of deaths, overwhelmed him. The ordinary man might stand all this, or suffer it in silence as a martyr, but the imperial consciousness of Jesus protested. In Gethsemane the reality of the temptation which had been with him from the beginning pressed him to the ground as he besought his Father that the cup might pass from him. The cup lacked nothing of bitterness, but the story is too familiar for repetition. How the Kingdom should be established he did not know. His life ended in failure, and in the darkness was not a ray of light. Only one thing remained, but that sufficed,—utter trust in the Father whom he loved. All his consciousness of divine

power, all his vision of God's character and will, all his own desires, all his hopes for humanity, are merged in his prayer, a prayer in which religion finds forever its supreme expression, "Father! Not my will, but thine, be done."

V

THE SON OF GOD

JESUS remains the central figure in the religious history and religious interest of the world. There is only one answer to the question which Professor Harnack asks, "Where in the history of mankind can we find anything resembling this: that men who had eaten and drunken with their Master should glorify him not only as the Revealer of God, but as the Prince of Life, as the Redeemer and Judge of the world, as the living power of its existence; and that a choir of Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, wise and foolish, should along with them confess that out of the fullness of this one man they have received grace for grace?" And now, after the twentieth century of the era which calls itself by

his name has dawned, there are everywhere multitudes who testify as to a living fact that they are saved and brought to God through him, while the missionary fire burns more strong and clear than in the first century, so that his church takes the world for its parish.

The facts are too great for our attempted explanations. Doubtless Jesus came when all things were ready, in the fullness of the time. So does successful power ever coincide with opportunity. His personality and authority drew many to him. They saw him full of grace and truth, of a wholly divine grace and truth. His presence brought God near; his own God-consciousness communicating itself to others. They were lifted out of the commonplace into a new experience, and became children of the Kingdom. All that religion means — the transformation of the soul, the revaluation of life, the transfiguration of the world — was theirs.

They had received glad tidings of great joy. They could not mourn, for they were the children of the bridechamber and the bridegroom was with them. "Blessed are ye," cried Jesus again and again; and the happiness was the present, conquering fact. All things were subject to him, — sea and air, and illness, and demons, and distress of mind. And him they loved, and in him they put their trust.

That first they should have taken him for a prophet, mighty in deed and word, and that later they should have believed his testimony that he was the Messiah, was inevitable. It is true that it was not his miracles which convinced them. They were not so wonderful as those recorded of Moses and Joshua and Elijah, and he refused to show the special sign which was expected of the Messiah. It was easy to doubt his works of healing, for had not the magicians imitated the wonders of Moses with their en-

chantments, and was it not possible that Jesus deceived the people by the help of demonic powers? Even his family thought him to be insane. It was only those who comprehended his spirit who were believers in his mission. The crucifixion dispelled their confidence. That a prophet should perish was of course to be expected, and even after his death his followers could so regard him; but only the resurrection restored their faith that he was Messiah.

The accounts of the appearances of the risen Saviour differ, it is true, in many particulars; and Paul, who is our earliest authority, puts the appearance to himself on the road to Damascus in the same category with the others. Moreover, he expressly refuses to discuss the nature of the resurrection body, reproving the inquiry as "foolish." The narrative shows at once that Christ appeared only to his disciples, and that they were convinced that God had

made both Lord and Saviour this Jesus who had been crucified. This was the first creed,—that Jesus, risen from the dead, was Messiah and Lord.

But testimony to any historic fact is a slender basis for a world movement, and testimony grows more uncertain with each passing year. It is not history which converts men. It is clear from the Gospels, the Acts, and most of all from the Epistles of Paul, that it was not a belief which created the Church, but an immediate experience of the power of God. The disciples felt themselves seized by the Spirit as Jesus had felt himself inspired, and this Spirit Paul identifies with the risen Christ. It is not now Jesus, after the flesh, who is important, but the Christ in Paul and in all believers who is the hope of glory. This accords perfectly with the convictions of the prophets and with their experience. It is no longer Paul who lives, but Christ liveth

in him, and the life he still lives in the flesh is in the faith of the Son of God, who loved him and gave himself for him. The same power which re-created Paul created the Christian Church. This is at the furthest extreme from a rational conviction, based on historical evidence, that the tomb was empty and that Jesus had risen. Important as that fact appeared, it had religious significance only as it brought the consciousness with it that the same power which raised Christ from the dead is in his followers. This thought pervades Paul's writings; and he is too conscious of the divine presence and power to substitute for it theology or history. It is not the testimony of the empty tomb which he seeks, but the evidence of a risen Christ in the lives of his converts.

Such an experience lends itself to the excesses and extravagances of ecstatic religion. So was it with the early Church.

The feeling of God's presence overwhelms and intoxicates, and there are prophesyings, utterances in unintelligible tongues, visions, and trances. It was all but inevitable that this consciousness of a divine power within should result in a religion which would put emotion before ethics and mysteries before a sober understanding. From this danger Christianity was saved. Paul is true to his Lord; for the relation between them is not an external one, since that which is deepest in him reflects the mind of Christ, and his character is like that of his Master, desiring the same things and hoping for the same great consummation. He extends the message and makes explicit what before was only implicit, so that the remaining bonds of Judaism are broken and the gospel becomes universal in its application. But Paul does not change its essential meaning. He has a philosophy of history, and expounds the Scriptures like a learned scribe, but phi-

losophy and exposition are secondary. As Jesus describes the judgment of the world as based not on creed but on service rendered to our fellow men, so does Paul in inspired poetry set forth the greatest thing in the world. It is not mysticism, notwithstanding Paul's mystic experiences; nor the working of wonders, though Paul worked wonders; nor the understanding of mysteries and the possession of knowledge, though Paul was an initiate and knew more than they all; nor asceticism and the surrender of possessions, though Paul had given up all; — but it is loving service of our fellows which is greater even than faith and hope. Like Jesus, again, Paul associates the worship of God with this service. He trusts God and loves man, the twofold aspect of a single consciousness, ethics and religion never to be separated. Trust in God, love to man, and the Spirit in the heart bring forth precisely the same fruits; and this is

what is meant by possessing the mind of Christ. The impulse which seized Paul and transformed him, converting his will, was ethical through and through.

But even Paul's converts could not all remain at this height. To many the sense of possession of the divine Spirit with the attendant ecstasy is the great thing. For them religion is precisely this, and it matters little how we attain it. Especially was there danger that the tie which bound to the historic Jesus would be broken, and a Greek theosophy with countless emanations from the infinitely remote God be substituted for the ethical monotheism of the prophets and the revelation in Christ. John protests against this tendency. He employs, it is true, the term *Logos;* he is mystical and transcendental; he translates the concrete situations with which Jesus dealt into abstractions; but he insists that true knowledge of God is possible only to those who love

their fellow men, and that it is the Christ who was seen and heard and handled which is the Word of Life. He, too, understands the Master, knowing that his disciples are not subjects of the earthly kingdom, — else would they have fought to protect their king, — but of one whose coming is in the heart and already manifest. With him the apocalyptic scenery disappears and salvation is a present fact. The disciples already are not servants but friends, and the end of their salvation is that they may be one with God as Christ is one with him. For God is not apart, — infinitely removed, — but he is known in the human relationships.

The death and resurrection of Jesus were the beginning of problems, not their solution. These facts needed explanation, for surely of all things the most incredible is this, that the Son of God should be executed as a malefactor. What could it be but a stumbling-block to the Jews and foolish-

ness to the Greeks? Nothing like it is found in any other great religion: not in Islam, for Mohammed died victorious in old age; not in Buddhism, for Gautama finished his earthly career aged and honored; not in Confucianism, for the Master lived out the earthly term of life. It is only Christianity which puts in the front the most terrible of facts and takes for its symbol a cross. Why should the Christ die? Why should he not simply overwhelm his enemies and reign, without this mysterious return for a time to his Father? The question had to be answered, for it belonged to the essence of the situation, and could not be escaped. Its answer, with the answer to the further question as to the nature and origin of Jesus, constituted the first theology. The first disciples can say no more than that the death was foretold by the prophets, and they use Old Testament imagery and rites for its exposition. In Paul is the beginning

of philosophic explanation, and never yet has any fully satisfied the Church, nor after all these centuries is there a clearer word than Browning's: —

> What lacks then of perfection fit for God,
> But just the instance which this tale affords
> Of love without a limit? So is strength,
> So is intelligence, let love be so,
> Unlimited in self-sacrifice,
> Then is the tale true and God shows complete.

And yet they cannot remain as final. Transferred into a Greek environment, it was inevitable that philosophic questions should emerge. This development of theology is not to be taken as merely transient and without meaning. That Greek theology has endured to our day, and that the Greek solutions still satisfy many, is testimony enough to their historic significance. When the gospel entered the Greek environment metaphysical questions became prominent. The answers found were of great and lasting

importance, for they exhibited Christian truth in forms which at once satisfied the intellect and conserved central religious values. That the creeds formulated in the fourth century still maintain their position in the Church is sufficient testimony to their historic significance. But we do not live in the Greek world, and its philosophy is not ours. The Greeks had only their own data, and logic, and categories of thought. They were not prophets, and they could embrace all the future neither in science of nature or of God. Their insight was their own, and the service they rendered is evidence at once that Christianity is not a provincialism, bound to its native soil, and also that there is a possibility of doing for it again what they did for it. Our categories are not theirs, nor our logic, nor our methods, nor our data; and to insist upon the form which they gave to the truth as ultimate is to attempt to check the progress of man's

mind and to make Christianity possible only for men who still dwell in an outgrown world of thought. To turn the living power of the Spirit into acceptance of dogma, formulated once for all, is to enslave the mind and to put limits to God's revelation of Himself.

The same judgment may be passed upon the Roman ecclesiasticism. How Christianity should have survived save as encased in the forms of the state one does not know. The freedom of the Spirit, the consciousness of the presence of the power of God in the soul, as the religious dynamic, gives place to the power of the community. Thus is it in every great movement which, beginning as a new insight, ends by taking its place among the governing institutions of society. But our recognition of the necessity of the imperial form does not compel us to take it as permanent. As Christianity could conquer the Roman

and imperial world, making its forms serve it, so may it conquer the modern democratic world, and make its forms serve it. Else, once more, must one conceive of the Roman imperialism as final, itself inspired by God.

But more than this. The continuity of history means neither a monotony which merely repeats the past, nor a complete break with it so that new forms are substituted for the old without progress. But the new grows out of the old and improves upon it. No great age is isolated. It would not be great had it to begin at the beginning. It is debtor to countless generations. Its thoughts, its aspirations, its ideals, are by inheritance from the boundless stores of humanity, but the new is unworthy of the old if it merely repeats it. So it is with every religion which aspires to dominion over all lands and all times. It does not repeat the past though it learns from it, for

it improves upon it. Surely we shall not convince the twentieth century that it is bound fast to the fourth.

It is not our purpose to trace even in outline the history of doctrine and the history of the Church, not even to show how the truth of Jesus has never been completely lost. Again and again when it has seemed to disappear in formalism, in ecclesiasticism, in dogma, or in mysticism, it has taken possession of elect souls and shone forth. In fact, the real meaning has remained especially with the "little ones." Men in the multitude have known what "Christian" means, and they have been quick to recognize the mind of the Lord in the disciple. To-day as in the past the common judgment is unerring, and it applies the same judgment to the Church as Jesus did in his description of the final day of his appearing.

Who, then, in our day has a right to call

himself by the name of Christ? Is there any room for doubt? What shall we put before the judgment of him whose name we bear? It is by the claims of conflicting sects and by the clamor of the traditions of men that we are bewildered. Still as of old is faith shown in conduct, not in formal creed. It is brought to the test of actuality. Nothing, for example, could be more transcendental than the divine forgiveness of sins, something which surely I am simply to believe! But not so! If forgiveness be divine it works in me, and I have forgiven as I trust in God to forgive me. Every article of the Christian's creed is alike simple, direct, of application to the ordinary relationships. For God is in man and with him, and not unlike him. As we have already seen, it is the statement of fact which Jesus makes. The law of gravitation, limitless as it is and governing the flight of stellar systems as it does, has not more to

do with my body than has the law of love with my inner life and my relations with my fellows.

The definition of my God is the description of that which I adore, and the description of the Christian's God is that of the Father of a limitless love. But I cannot at once adore it and forsake it. It cannot command my soul and leave my conduct untouched. Else is it a beautiful dream which terminates with awaking; but faith lays hold on that which is, and seeks its realization in life and in the world. The man who truly adores wisdom seeks it, and he who worships the Father of our Lord transcends the ordinary kindness and charity, and strives to be a son of God, a brother of Christ, perfect as the Father is perfect.

What in our modern age forbids this religion of Christ? It is only the forms and trappings which are outgrown. Never be-

fore was the gospel of Jesus in its sincerity so widely recognized and followed; never before was there such enthusiasm in the service of humanity; never before did so many powers combine for the doing of the Father's will on earth. The gospel of Jesus, beginning with the facts of the common humanity, renders the feelings purposeful and intelligent, and universalizes them. It was a wonderful achievement when the ancients conceived of a Church Catholic embracing all lands and all ages, ruling not by force but by a common belief and sentiment. A still greater vision dawns upon the twentieth century, and one more truly Christian, — of all lands and all races bound together by a recognition of their essential brotherhood, their relationship at once to each other and to God. In wide circles the brotherhood of man and the Fatherhood of God has become a commonplace. To make it fact is the one mission which

remains for the Church, and the fact will not be commonplace. In ever widening groups common interests bind men together. Already international rivalry seems as irrational as the ancient feuds of neighborhoods. The unity of commerce and the solidarity of labor strive for peace, and the brotherhood of invention and of science prepares for it. The notion that business is war already condemns business methods and points to a time, not far distant, when competition shall give place to coöperation, the arts of war to the instruments of peace. Steam and electricity are agents in the bringing in of that day, for the gospel of Jesus has behind it forces other and wider than the preaching of its heralds, or the organization of the Church.

Such a belief in the gospel and its triumphs does not free the Christian from conflict. He is not thrown to the lions, but there are many adversaries. He must fight

the good fight as he consciously attempts that which God's power will accomplish. In this too he returns to the gospel, knowing that the Kingdom is not to come by his might, yet eager to have a part in the conflict. In the Christian the tendencies outlined become fully purposeful. He as an individual adopts them as his own, and follows unhesitatingly whither they lead, though at great cost and without seeing the achievement. He is one with Jesus in faith, in hope, in love, in activity. The kingdom for which he prays is not yet here, and the belief that for it are enlisted the forces of the universe, which is God's, inspires him with courage. He works out his salvation just because he knows that it is God who worketh within him to will and to do. Still more — this conception stretches forward to the world beyond death. It is this unity with the purpose of God which alone makes immortality credible or de-

sirable. The life to come is not to be proved by logic and established by reason. It is rendered revolting by the evidence given by spirits through mediums. It is a truth of faith, known to those who beyond all else value most their oneness with Christ in God. It is true it is a venture of faith. What that future shall be they cannot know, but with their Lord they are confident of the ultimate triumph. Jesus knew that his Father was Lord of heaven and earth, and that in the end his will shall be done. And that is of all things best, for the individual and for the world, and the Christian finds his trust grow strong in proportion as he enters into the mind of Christ. Jesus is Lord, and faith finds a support in his faith, and in his words which reflect his clear insight into the purpose of our Father, and knowledge of his blessed will.

Such a conception makes all callings in life religious. Other ideals confine religious

activity to certain persons or to certain sets of acts. If religion be chiefly intellectual, an attitude to the whole, or a perception of the Infinite, then in its highest power it belongs only to the intellectual élite. Or if it be predominantly emotional, then again whole classes are excluded, for mysticism even in its modified forms is inaccessible to many. Or if it be a definite experience, as of one's utter unworthiness, then only by accommodation and a misuse of terms can persons of a different attitude be "converts"; but all alike, in every field, in the investigation of truth, in mystic feelings, in the plain life of every day, may find themselves one with Christ as they adopt his purpose.

The gospel is not inconsistent with many and varied types of religious experience. We find no single form even in the New Testament. St. Paul, the greatest of Christians, was mystic as he was scholar, his

experience covering a wide range, but it never obscured or made subordinate the essential matter. The gospel of Jesus could not be universal did it not make possible the evangelical experience, the ecclesiastical, the intellectual, and the mystic, all Christian when subordinated to that which is greatest. So is it with theology. Many persons must ask the ultimate questions and seek to bring truth into systematic relationship. To others still a theology without metaphysics is a contradiction in terms. So is authority, of the Bible or of the Church, needed by many minds. These all are Christian if they as schoolmasters lead to Christ and place above knowledge and ecclesiasticism self-sacrificing love. For the purpose of Jesus is not exclusive and isolating — it is penetrating and vital. There is a wide region of religious thought activity, organization, and feeling which are important, and all but indispensable. They

are unchristian only when they usurp the first place, substituting something else — creed, or system, or emotion, or authority — for that by which he judges the world.

This, too, gives the true place to the Church. It has lost many of the ancient functions, and it should not seek to recover them. It cannot control education, nor direct the healing of men's bodies, nor wholly their forms of worship. It is the company of those who, moved by the Spirit of Christ and in conscious sympathy with him, sustain each other in making the world the dwelling-place of God. With the conception of the Kingdom, the all-embracing brotherhood of mankind, there is not only opportunity for every form of activity, of every variety of life, but an urgent need for coöperation. As an association of those thus animated by a common purpose, its place is clear. It need no longer fear that its future will be less than its past. It will know that

its task is the training of the young for such activity, and the support of those who feel themselves unequal to the task, and the carrying on of common ends where wide coöperation is required. In each community the Church may promote all which is highest, being the organ of the common life for common ends, and in the wide world it will summon great stores of energy for the divine task. Its worship will be for inspiration, for the setting forth of the common ideal, and for the excitation of the emotions which are essential to self-denying activity. It will no longer oppose science, but it will look to it for instruction in the methods by which the welfare of mankind is to be promoted, and will think of truth as from the Father of truth, given to his children for their good. Wealth will lose its degradation when men no longer attempt to worship God and Mammon, but make riches the instrument of service.

If now we ask what part in this has the historic Jesus, and whether, with the increasing adoption of the principle which he enunciated, he will not lose his position of supremacy, the answer is plain. How can it be that any shall supplant him as Lord and Saviour? Never before were more inspired by him. He still calls forth the profoundest response in multitudes. He is still worshiped, trusted, and loved by his "friends," and acknowledged as the supreme and unquestioned Son of the Father. It is much that in our day his death upon the cross casts no shadow upon his divinity, since men have come to see the clearest token of deity in unlimited love, in utter self-sacrifice. But again we turn to the Church. If it is to put its strongest emphasis on the metaphysics of his person or the nature of his birth and the mode of his resurrection, and if it insist on a theology which was formed in social conditions

which no longer obtain, then indeed he may take his place with the heroes and martyrs and gods of the past. But if the Church can see his great purpose clear, and make chief what he made chief, its judgment his judgment, then will his Spirit still prevail, and he shall move men in the time to come as in the ages past. It is to the test of reality that the appeal is made, to the Word still made flesh and dwelling among us, the present a living unity with the past, his Church one with him.

The religion of Jesus still inspires faith, —not only the faith of constant discipleship, but the faith which saves in extremity. He has little experience of life who has not met sorrow which is beyond the help of man. In the last emergencies of life and death, a religion which is to be an anchor for the soul must prove its power. And the religion of Jesus offers itself to this ultimate test. It is vain to say to one in such

case that he is to aid his fellows; the opportunity may be gone forever. There remains only the casting of one's self upon a divine love and mercy. But with such trust comes the peace which passeth all understanding, and which the world can never take away as it can never give it. In such an hour true faith rests upon this revelation of God, the revelation in all the blessed relationships of life, in the godlike men whose lives have been inspired by love, in the life and death of the Son of God, in which we see the truth incarnate. It cannot be that the source of all is less than these, but rather that all these are named from Him who is above every name. Surely this faith is not in freedom from the ills which belong to mortality, or in miraculous escape from sufferings, or in a lot which by divine interposition shall be happier than that of others; but it makes the sons of the Father more than conquerors in all things,

in sufferings as in joys, in death as in life, and in the trust that even death can be no loss for the objects of the Father's love. And finally, when every comfort fails and life seems to perish in a dark futility, it inspires the faith which conquered in Gethsemane, its ultimate expression being the prayer of the Son of God, "Father! not my will, but thine be done."

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EDITED BY
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